

Appl. No. : 09/662,454
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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 46, 47, 49 and 50 without prejudice, and amend Claims 42, 45, 48, 51, 53, and 53 as follows:

- 1-41 (Canceled)
42. (Currently Amended) A composition comprising a purified and isolated nucleic acid molecule, which encodes human hepatitis C virus (HCV), wherein expression of said molecule in transfected cells results in production of virus when transfected into cells, wherein said molecule encodes ~~said nucleic acid molecule encoding a human hepatitis C virus polypeptide having~~ the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 3.
43. (Canceled)
44. (Canceled)
45. (Currently Amended) The composition of claim 42, wherein said ~~the nucleic acid~~ molecule comprises the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 4.
46. (Canceled)
47. (Canceled)
48. (Currently Amended) A composition comprising a purified and isolated nucleic acid molecule, which encodes human HCV, wherein expression of said molecule in transfected cells results in production of virus ~~said nucleic acid molecule encoding a human hepatitis C virus polypeptide having the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 3,~~ and wherein a portion of the ~~said~~ nucleic acid molecule which encodes the structural region of hepatitis C virus has been replaced by the structural region from the genome of another ~~with a portion of a nucleic acid molecule of a different~~ hepatitis C virus strain to produce a chimeric nucleic acid sequence such that infectious nucleic acid sequence of 1b strain having SEQ ID NO: 3 is used to produce a chimera with sequence from the genome of another strain of HCV from a different genotype or subtype ~~that encodes the corresponding structural region.~~
49. (Canceled)
50. (Canceled)
51. (Currently Amended) A composition comprising a purified and isolated nucleic acid molecule, which encodes human HCV, wherein expression of said molecule in transfected cells results in production of virus ~~said nucleic acid molecule encoding a human hepatitis C virus polypeptide having the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 3,~~ and wherein

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a portion of the nucleic acid molecule which encodes at least one HCV protein has been replaced ~~by~~ with a portion of the genome of another hepatitis C virus strain which encodes the corresponding HCV protein to produce a chimeric nucleic acid sequence such that infectious nucleic acid sequence of 1b strain having SEQ ID NO: 3 is used to produce a chimera with sequence from the genome of another strain of HCV from a different genotype or subtype.

52. **(Currently amended)** The composition of claim 51, wherein the HCV protein is selected from the group consisting of: NS3 protease, E1 ~~protein~~, E2 ~~protein~~ and NS4 proteins.
53. **(Currently Amended)** A composition comprising a purified and isolated nucleic acid molecule, which encodes human HCV, wherein expression of said molecule in transfected cells results in production of virus ~~said nucleic acid molecule encoding a human hepatitis C virus polypeptide having the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 3, wherein a portion of the nucleic acid molecule encoding all or part of an HCV protein has been deleted, and wherein the HCV protein is selected from the group consisting of P7, NS4B and NS5A proteins to produce a deletion of the infectious nucleic acid sequence such that infectious nucleic acid sequence of 1b strain having SEQ ID NO: 3 is used to produce a deletion.~~
54. **(Canceled)**
55. **(Previously presented)** A method for inducing an immune response comprising the administration to an animal an effective amount of the composition of claim 42, 48, 51 or 53 to induce an immune response.
56. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 55, wherein the composition is provided to an animal not infected with a hepatitis C virus.
57. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 55, wherein the composition is provided to an animal infected with a hepatitis C virus.